

The Cochin Marumakkathayam Bill.

Mr. P. Kumaran Ezhuthassan (*Wadakkancheri*).—I beg to move that the Cochin Marumakkathayam Bill be taken up and finally passed.

Mr. E. Ikkanda Warriar (*Urakam*).—I second it.

Motion was put and carried.

The Cochin Maternity Benefit Bill.

† **Dr. Mrs. G. M. D' Souza Williams** (*Nominated*).—Mr. President, Sir, I move that the Cochin Maternity Benefit Bill may be read in Council. In doing so, I would like to bring to the attention of the Hon'ble Members the urgent need for a social legislation of the kind.

Our State is rapidly getting industrialised with the result that we have today 71 factories employing 1170 women workers. These figures have been supplied to me by the Inspector of Factories and Boilers and I may be taken as correct. With the increased facilities for industries there will be a further increase in the number of factories and consequently in the number of women workers.

The Hon'ble Members of this House will remember that some time back this House passed a Factory Bill to regulate the conditions of labour in the Cochin State. Now it is only in the fitness of things that we should go a step further and pass this Maternity Benefit Bill as well. I may say that a similar legislation is in force in British India and in some of the progressive States like Mysore. From a letter I had from the Secretary to the Mysore Legislative Council I understand that the Maternity Benefit Bill of that State was read, considered and referred to a Select Committee on 1st July 1936 and it was finally passed on the 25th January 1937.

The Bill that I introduce in this Council is a very modest one. It attempts to provide a very small compensation to be paid to the women workers in factories for a few weeks before and for a few weeks after confinement.

In my professional experience I have come across several pitiable cases of women workers, factory workers, suffering from uterine heamorrhage and other serious complaints because they had to go to work as early as 20 or 25 days after confinement. These unfortunate women had to go to work so early